

Bowden's work a "shot in the arm" for Kansas kids

*by Stacey Herman, staff writer
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Sue Bowden is retiring from her position as the Immunization Program Manager on March 11 but not from helping kids. She was honored at a retirement party on Friday, March 4. Much of Bowden's recent work was spent encouraging reluctant Kansas children and adults to get immunized, as well as navigating the administrative complexities associated with that task. Her work with the Kansas Immunization Program has been "a shot in the arm" for all Kansans - both figuratively and literally.



Bowden has served as the Immunization Program Manager for the last four years of her 11-year career in state government. She is a registered nurse whose work experience also includes elementary school nursing and consulting for the Kansas Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention Program.

One of Sue's most significant accomplishments is her work on a web-based Immunization Registry to help families and health care professionals track when Kansas children and adults are immunized. The new system will alleviate the problem of lost immunization records that has occurred when families move or change doctors.

"Establishing the registry has been a very complex project and she had the overall vision and leadership skills to bring a variety of partners together to make it happen," said Dick Morrissey, interim director, Division of Health. "Sue's knowledge in this area is so critical that she will consult with the agency on this project after she retires."

Bowden shares the credit for this accomplishment and others with her team. "I have been lucky because I had a great team. I never really had to direct them. They are second to none and I consider them my second family. That is why it is so hard to leave," she said.

"Sue has been a compassionate and upright director of the Immunization Program; empowering her staff to achieve new goals while providing strong leadership," said Kimee Pierson, KDHE immunization nurse consultant.

She will be spending her retirement on another worthy and noble cause - taking care of her newborn, twin grandchildren.



"We are fortunate that the agency will still be able to 'share' her with the twins, as she consults with us on getting the registry up and operating. Tending to the health and well-being of all children is clearly a higher calling for Sue," said KDHE Secretary Roderick Bremby.